

Ormerod, David and Christopher Wortham, eds., *Andrew Marvell: Pastoral and Lyric Poems 1681*, Nedlands, University of Western Australia Press, 2000; paper; pp. 1, 337; RRP AUS\$38.45; ISBN 187626814X.

This new edition of a number of Marvell's poems is both outstanding and disappointing.

Outstanding is the scholarship displayed in the areas of commentary and annotation. The general introduction is excellent, *as are* the briefer prefaces to the groups of poems ('The Dialogues', 'The Amorous Poems', etc.) which the editors have chosen to present. There is an extraordinarily detailed bibliography which will prove helpful to numerous scholars and advanced students (undergraduates will probably find the entries too long). The editors – whose earlier edition of *Doctor Faustus* (1985) rightly attracted great praise – are truly fine scholars, and their knowledge of Marvell's poetry and matters related to it is massive. Other readers will be enormously grateful for the erudition and insight here brought to bear on explanation of the text, especially in the long, detailed notes which accompany each poem. Sometimes one might wish for notes a bit shorter and perhaps more directly to the point; there is a tendency to move rather too readily into consideration of what used to be called 'background' knowledge. For example, the phrase 'sea-monsters' in 'Bermudas' seems primarily an allusion to whales, and only secondarily to 'the Biblical Leviathan' with which the editors immediately start their comment. Even so, this book provides an important contribution to the knowledge and understanding of Marvell's poetry, and to much of the mental world which that poetry expresses.

I am a little unhappy with the title used. *Pastoral and Lyric Poems 1681* may well suggest to prospective buyers that there is a volume with this title, but there is not. Nor is the edition confined to pastoral and lyric poems from the 1681 *Miscellaneous Poems*, even though they are in the majority. It includes, for example, the 'Horatian Ode' (as part of a section called 'Elegy and Panegyric'). So, of course, should any sensible edition of Marvell's poetry, but the poem is neither pastoral nor lyrical, and the editors should have chosen a title like *Selected Poems*, especially as many more poems might have been presented. However, it is probably fair to say that this edition does offer us most of Marvell's finest poetic work.

It comes as a disappointment, then, to find the text much less satisfactory, and that fact would make it impossible for me to set this volume as a student text. Indeed, I could not in all conscience recommend it for attention to anyone

except fellow scholars who are prepared to do comparative work by consulting the work of other editors, and of course the 1681 *Miscellaneous Poems* on which the text is based. Other readers would be best advised to use, as a modernised text, the Penguin *Complete Poems* edited by Elizabeth Story Donno (1972; henceforth 'D'), or, if they wish to consult an 'old-spelling' edition, that of H. M. Margoliouth's *Poems and Letters* (Oxford University Press, 1971, 3rd ed., rev. Pierre Legouis).

The editors repunctuate the 1681 text 'in order to obtain, in a non-Empsonian sense [*sic*], one single unambiguous literal meaning' (p. v). I am all in favour of clear, modern punctuation, such as presumably the author would approve of if alive today. But what do we get? The end of 'The Garden' is presented like this:

How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers.

Here we have, I am convinced, a punctuation mark Marvell would *not* approve of, and I have difficulty understanding how anyone could. Undoubtedly, this sentence is a question. Often this fact has been expressed by – acceptably enough – an exclamation mark at the end (a tradition followed by D), but a question mark, as in *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Vol. 1 (6th ed., 1993), is obviously better. A full stop is either incomprehensible, or suggests a kind of ambiguity we can well do without. This instance is not unique. A similar unwise full stop occurs in the same poem at lines 10 and 60.

There are several instances where the use of a full stop suggests that a sentence has finished when it is essential for a reader to see that it has not. Thus at the end of l. 20 of 'The Definition of Love', or ll. 28 and 80 of the 'Horatian Ode'. It should be stressed that such instances are not a matter of subjective opinion, but of sense or non-sense. Sometimes strange punctuation marks are not as damaging, but look clumsy and ungrammatical to such an extent that one would correct them in a student essay: thus 'Thou, by' in 'To His Coy Mistress' (l. 5), should be 'Thou by', and l. 19 should have, not 'For lady', but 'For, lady'. In some instances sense is really very difficult to find. 'Bermudas', ll. 19-20, occurs in D (and elsewhere) as follows: '[God] does in the pom'granats close/ Jewels more rich than Ormus shows'. I take this to mean: 'God encloses within the pomegranates jewels (i.e. seeds) richer than those shown by Hormuz (even though that is famous for the gems it trades)'. The sense gets lost completely in this new edition, which has '[God] does, in the pomegranate's close, / Jewels more rich than Ormus show's'. Not the least of the difficulties

here – and the editors leave it unexplained – is what, in this interpretation, *close* would mean, which surely is a verb depending on *does* (not a noun meaning 'enclosed place', as the reference is to what is *revealed*). The structure 'does ... show's' is inherently forced and un-English.

Something needs to be said about the handling of Marvell's prosody in this text. It is regularly obscured and violated. Conventionally, l. 44 of 'To His Coy Mistress' has contained 'Thorough the iron grates of life', not 'Through ...'. 'Thorough' is essential, not optional, as we need eight syllables within the overall prosodic scheme, and the line as it has come down to us not only has those syllables, but appropriately starts with a 'weak' one. Nor are the editors consistent about the matter, for in the 'Horatian Ode' they correctly have 'through' in l. 11, but 'thorough' in l. 15. The 1681 text – which the editors unjustly consider 'corrupt' (p. xix) – is most punctilious about matters like this. This is not least the case with respect to syllabic versus non-syllabic *ed* as a verbal ending. Thus, in the 'Horatian Ode', for example, we should have, as modernised forms, 'armèd' in l. 55 and 'forcèd' in l. 66, not 'armed' and 'forced', which modern readers will automatically, but wrongly, pronounce as monosyllables. D maintains distinctions like this religiously, and similarly precisely prints e.g. 'flow'rs' in line 7 of 'The Garden' where Ormerod and Wortham have 'flowers'.

In short, then, this is an edition of a very uneven nature. Much of it is very distinguished, but one hopes the editors will thoroughly revise the text of the poems for a future reprint.

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Perry, Curtis, ed., *Material Culture and Cultural Materialisms in the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (Arizona Studies in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance 5), Turnhout, Brepols, 2001; paper; pp. xxiv, 246; 16 b/w illustrations; RRP EUR50.00; ISBN 2503510744.

In the words of its editor Curtis Perry, this collection of essays marks a 'return to the hard facts of material culture in order to critique and revise received critical paradigms' (p. x).

By 'hard facts' Perry seems to mean that most of these essays call on a world of things that can be touched and seen as a means of understanding that